

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

Facilities Management News

Office of Public Housing
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U.S. Department of Housing and

First, I would like to thank all the attendees that made the Texas Housing Authority conference in Corpus Christi, Texas during August 26–28. I don't know the attendance stats, but from my viewpoint it was a great showing. The seminars were well attended. Our special thanks to Linda Bryant, THA for doing a fantastic job putting together a most successful conference.

I truly enjoyed having the opportunity to meet the many PHA folks who are in the “front line” taking care of our public housing customers. I also got a chance to meet new staff members, as well as, those of us who have been around a while.

I hope that you took time to attend the RIM briefing provided by Deborah Johnson and I. We also had a CFP presentation by Margaret Sanchez, as well as, a PIC help desk setup by Anita Sue Colton.

In this edition, we have some good information on energy efficiency, public housing utility allowance, fire prevention, and other important current issues.

For Capital Fund program and Facilities issues please contact Margaret Sanchez, Tomas Romero, or Ruben Villanueva, Public Housing Facilities Management Specialists for technical assistance at (210) 475-6800 extensions 2213, 2247, or 2108.

David Pohler

Investing in energy efficiency programs.

The following article was published in the March/April 2003 edition of the Journal of Housing and Community Development.

Energy efficiency is a broad topic, ranging from energy and water efficient equipment such as geothermal heat pumps to bulk purchasing, energy-related financing, or photovoltaics. Now, thanks to a governmental interagency agreement and partnerships with Rebuild America, local housing agencies have a growing number of models that demonstrate successful ways to save energy. In September 2002, HUD, DOE, and the Environmental Protection Agency signed a memorandum of understanding to promote the more widespread use of Energy Star products in HUD's inventory of public, assisted, and insured housing. The Consortium for Energy Efficiency is another group that promotes energy-efficient appliances. Lack of understanding, time, and access are some of the key barriers that prevent the multifamily housing market from better utilizing energy-efficient techniques. It is important to take the long-term on costs. Energy solutions are the answer. As time passes and more case studies are available, it will be more difficult for people to say energy efficiency does not work.

On average, local housing agencies (LHAs) spend about one quarter of their operating budgets on utilities. That's just one reason the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is looking at ways to increase energy efficiency in public housing.

Energy efficiency is a broad topic, ranging from energy and water efficient equipment such as...

Due to space limitation, I have omitted the rest of the article. If you would like the remainder of this article, please let me know and I will forward you the electronic version.

Public Housing - Resident Allowances for Utilities

24 CFR Part 965.507 states - *PHAs shall review at least annually the basis on which utility allowances have been established and, if reasonably required in order to continue adherence to the standards stated in § 965.505, shall establish revised allowances.... The PHA may revise its allowances for resident-purchased utilities between annual reviews if there is a rate change (including fuel adjustments) and shall be required to do so if such change by itself or together with prior rate changes not adjusted for, results in a change of 10 percent or more from the rates on which such allowances were based. Adjustments to resident payments as a result of such changes shall be retroactive to the first day of the month following the month in which the last rate change taken into account in such revision became effective. Such rate changes shall not be subject to the 60-day notice requirement of § 965.502(c).*

PIH Notice 2003-22, Sep 11, 2003, limits revisions to a PHA's Operating Subsidy eligibility to mathematical, clerical and informational system errors only. Since revised utility allowances could affect a PHA's rental revenue, we strongly recommend that PHAs with tenant-purchased utilities amend, as appropriate, their utility allowance schedules in advance of the date by which projected rental revenue is calculated, i.e., at least six months prior to the beginning of their respective fiscal year.

Closing questions – Has your utility rates changed by at least ten percent? When is the last time you checked these rates and made the percent of change calculation?

Please contact either Ninfia Andrew or Byron Gulley, at 210 475-6800, at extensions. 2220 or 2109, respectively



Byron Gulley

Need a Disaster Plan?

Corpus Christi PHA has an impressive Hurricane Procedures Plan that was incorporated into their city's Emergency Response program. The 27-page document contains several checklists and a well-designed action plan. They have agreed to share the plan with any interested PHA. Most importantly, the plan could easily be converted into a Disaster or can be kept as a hurricane plan. Let me know by email, if you would like a copy. Thanks again Corpus Christi for sharing the hurricane plan.

THA E-News 03-05 August 12, 2003 "Contract Labor" and Energy Conservation tip

The Term "Contract Labor" Continues to Confuse Under the Texas Local Government Code, there is no official category of "contract labor". According to the Texas Municipal League, if a local government hires an individual and pays that person, the person is considered an employee. This means that the hiring entity is responsible for worker's comp and withholding for the individual. Local Governments can contract for a task when the contractor provides the materials and tools to get the job done, works according to his/her own schedule, is responsible for the work to be accomplished and provides his/her own worker's comp and insurance. When work is performed in this manner, the individual is considered a contractor and not an employee. The key questions are: who provides the materials and tools, who sets the work schedule and who provides worker's comp and insurance.

Energy Conservation Tip from Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse

Older refrigerators consume four times more electricity than the more efficient new models; so replacing old units with the new efficient models can amount to substantial energy and cost savings

to a PHA. HUD recommends Energy Star-qualified units.

The above two articles provided by THA E-News, 03—05, August 12, 2003 edition.

Energy Star Program Information

US Government promotes and highly encourages the Energy Star, an energy saving program.

The Energy Star labeled household appliances, such as water heaters, refrigerators, stoves, windows, doors, insulation, and building materials are some of the products that offer the Energy Star label. Those products provide superior energy conservation that result in energy dollars being saved. Here are some related websites:

<http://www.energystar.gov/>

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=commer_refrig.pr_commercial_refrigerators

<http://www.hud.gov:80/news/release.cfm?content=pr02-105.cfm>

<http://www.hud.gov:80/news/releasedocs/mou.pdf>

Do you have a fire prevention program?

Would like to share with you a recent fire damage incident that occurred at one of our PHAs. Luckily no one was reported hurt or injured; however, the three-bedroom house sustained extensive smoke and wall damage. Closed interior doors protected personal belongings.

The fire started in a bedroom, and a young child was suspected of starting the fire while playing with matches or a lighter. The family was very fortunate the smoke alarms were fully operational and alerted them in time for them to vacate the burning house. According to a firefighter, it took four to eight minutes from the time the fire started

until it was raging. Interestingly enough, the fire damage could have been worse.

The family was treated for smoke inhalation and they relocated in a vacant unit in a nearby neighborhood.

The fire marshal suggested the children enroll in the fire department's juvenile fire-starter program.

Some thought provoking questions:

- Does your local fire department have a similar juvenile Fire Starter program?
- Are your smoke alarms in good working order?
- How often are they tested and by whom?

Procurement – What's required for a Solicitation for Offers

- Instructions to bidders, form HUD 5369
- Invitation to Bid
- Bid Form
- Representations & Certs, form HUD 5369A
- HUD Wage Determination
- General Condition, form HUD 5370
- Special/Supplemental Conditions
- Technical Specifications/Drawings
- Cost Analysis

Voucher Home Ownership (HO) Program

The Texas Section 8 Home Ownership program is gaining momentum in our area. Currently there are five PHAs with active programs. They are Taylor, Brownsville, Travis County, McAllen, and San Benito, TX. Please let us know if you are a participating PHA.

During the THA conference in Corpus Christi we held a seminar with a panel consisting of a builder, loan counselor and mortgage lender. We plan to have a like session in the November time frame. In the meantime, we are getting a website together

that will have sample material for PHA use. The material will consist of a brochure, checklists, forms letters, and a sundry of some very useful material for any PHA interested starting the program. In addition, we shall post current information and POCs for the program.

Please let me know if you are interested, so that I can add you to our HO email distribution. You can make a difference in helping one of your families achieve the "American Dream" – home ownership!

Mold Introduction...

PHAs are encountering mold HQS issues with more frequency and hope you find some Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) resources helpful. The first is the mold topic as listed on the EPA's website. Please note the website address below. The second piece is the EPA guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home, that I emailed you. Please let me know if you need another copy.

Molds produce tiny spores to reproduce. Mold spores waft through the indoor and outdoor air continually. When mold spores land on a damp spot indoors, they may begin growing and digesting whatever they are growing on in order to survive. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods. When excessive moisture or water accumulates indoors, mold growth will often occur, particularly if the moisture problem remains undiscovered or un-addressed. There is no practical way to eliminate all molds and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.

For more EPA mold information:

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldresources.html>

Upcoming January News Topics:

- ❑ PHAS
- ❑ eLOCCS monthly obligations
- ❑ EH&S new reporting requirements